

Message Text

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ORIGIN DLOS-09

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CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-08 EPA-01
SOE-02 DOE-11 FMC-01 TRSE-00 H-01 INR-10 INT-05
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INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
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AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 055571

CANBERRA FOR AMBASSADOR BREWSTER AND NORMAN WULF

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PLOS

SUBJECT: LOS - PRESIDENT AMERASINGHE

REF: CANBERRA 1568

1. THERE FOLLOWS IN PARAGRAPH 2 AN EXTRACT FROM A CABLE
DATED FEBRUARY 28 FROM THE NEW ZEALAND MINISTRY OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS TO THE NEW ZEALAND EMBASSY, WASHINGTON. THIS EX-
TRACT WAS SENT TO US BY THE NEW ZEALAND EMBASSY HERE WHICH
NOTES THAT THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES IN CANBERRA, OTTAWA,
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LONDON AND THE UN HAVE BEEN ADVISED OF ITS CONTENTS.

2. "DURING THE VISIT OF THE SRI LANKAN FOREIGN MINISTER
LAST WEEK, OUR MINISTER RAISED THE QUESTION OF AMERASINGHE'S
CONTINUED PRESIDENCY OF THE LOS CONFERENCE. MR. TALBOYS
EXPRESSED OUR VERY GREAT CONCERN TO SEE AMERASINGHE RETAIN
HIS CAPACITY AS PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE. IN RESPONSE,

MR.HAMEED SAID THE POSITION OF THE SRI LANKAN GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN MADE CLEAR AT THE UNITED NATIONS: 'AMERASINGHE WILL CEASE TO BE OUR REPRESENTATIVE, BUT IF HE IS ASKED TO KEEP THE CHAIR WE WILL HAVE NO OBJECTION.' MR. TALBOYS FOLLOWED UP BY ENQUIRING WHETHER AMERASINGHE COULD STILL BE A MEMBER OF THE SRI LANKAN DELEGATION. HE NOTED THAT AS WE UNDERSTOOD THE SITUATION (IN WHICH THE CONSENT OF THE LATIN AMERICAN GROUP HAD NOT BEEN GIVEN), AMERASINGHE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO RETAIN THE PRESIDENCY OTHERWISE. MR. HAMEED REPLIED THAT THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THE CASE HAD BEEN PUT TO SRI LANKA IN THAT WAY. AS FAR AS HE KNEW SRI LANKA HAD BEEN ASKED ONLY WHETHER IT OBJECTED TO AMERASINGHE'S CONTINUING AS PRESIDENT WITHOUT SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO HIS CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP OR NON-MEMBERSHIP OF THE SRI LANKAN DELEGATION. MR. TALBOYS STRESSED THAT AMERASINGHE WOULD NOT HAVE TO BE HEAD OF THE SRI LANKAN DELEGATION TO RETAIN THE PRESIDENCY BUT THAT THE PRESIDENT WHOEVER HE WERE, NEEDED, AT LEAST IN THE VIEW OF SOME DELEGATIONS, TO BE ATTACHED TO A DELEGATION. MR. HAMEED SAID HE COULD SEE THE VALIDITY OF THAT ARGUMENT BUT REPEATED THAT IT WAS THE FIRST TIME IT HAD BEEN PUT TO HIM.

"WE CONSIDER THIS EXCHANGE TO BE ENCOURAGING. MR. HAMEED DID NOT COMMIT HIMSELF TO ACCEPTING THAT AMERASINGHE COULD BE ATTACHED TO THE SRI LANKAN DELEGATION AS SOME KIND OF ADVISOR, BUT HE CERTAINLY DID NOT RULE IT OUT AND SEEMED CONFIDENTIAL

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GENUINELY NOT TO HAVE CONSIDERED A COMPROMISE OF THIS NATURE. ACCORDINGLY, WE SHOULD LIKE YOU (MR. M.J.C. TEMPLETON, NEW ZEALAND UN PERMREP) TO DRAW THE EXCHANGE TO THE ATTENTION OF SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE LOS SECRETARIAT, AND INDICATE THAT IN OUR VIEW THERE SEEMS ROOM FOR THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO FOLLOW UP ON HIS EARLIER APPROACH IN COLOMBO."

CHRISTOPHER

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